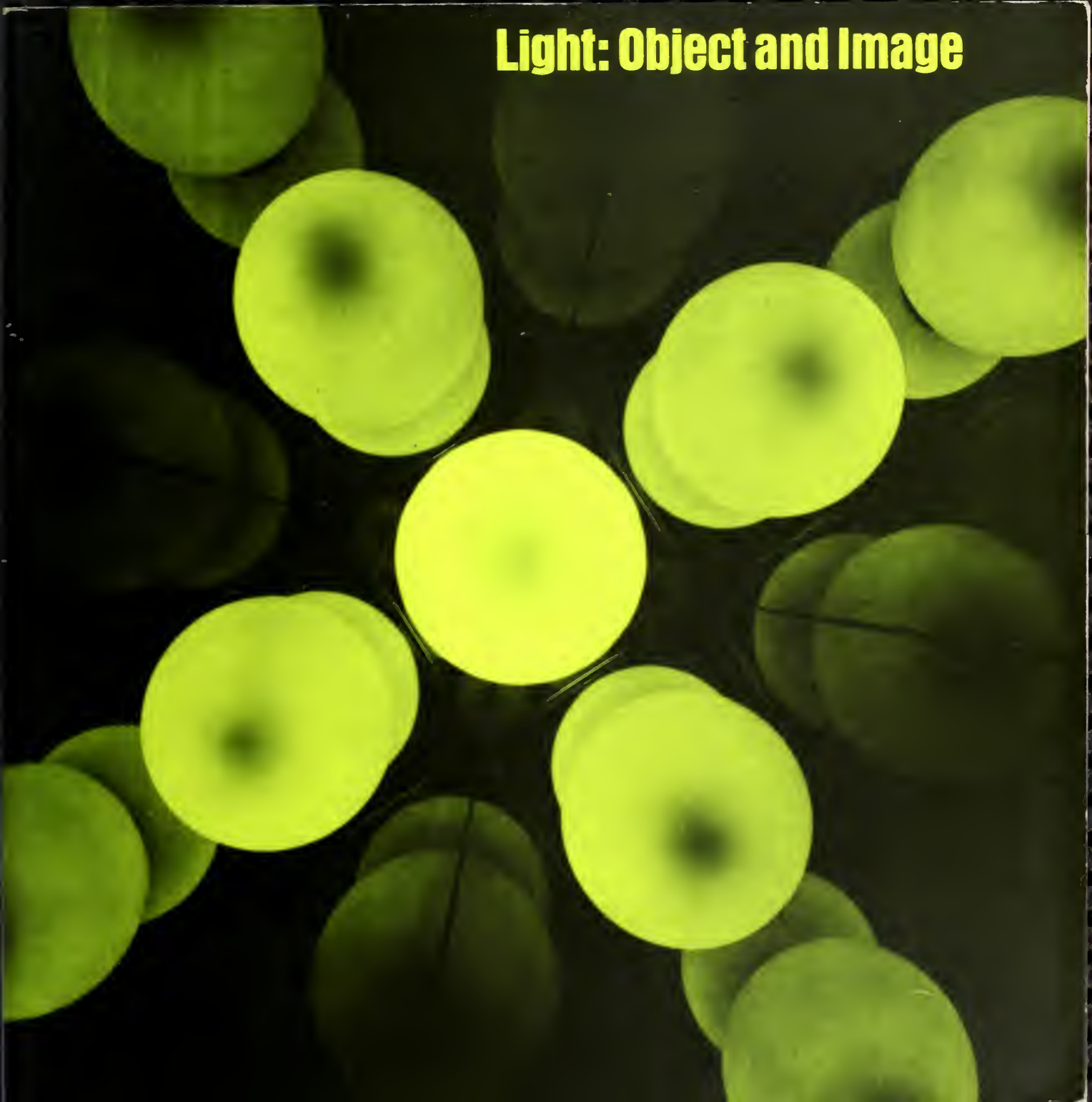


Light: Object and Image







Light: Object and Image

by Robert Doty

bibliography by Neil L. Hart

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New York**

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Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
July 23-September 29, 1968

The Memorial Art Gallery, University
of Rochester, Rochester, New York
October 25-December 8, 1968

Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York
January 5-March 2, 1969

Root Art Center, Hamilton College,
Clinton, New York
February 23-March 22, 1969
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R.M.D.

Lenders

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spectator. Equally desirable is the inherent power to cause change. Dan Flavin and Stephen Antonakos use light to nullify space while Boyd Mefferd and Howard Jones apply control mechanisms to alter the presence of the work itself. But passion for technology contains a trap. Too often the artist who becomes involved with the complexities of mechanical and electronic devices emerges as an inventor or gadgeteer, and his goal, the creation of an esthetically significant work, is lost. Much 'art' has been justified recently in the name of technology. Overawed by technique, the artist too often forgets his intentions and becomes a victim of his own tools and materials. But some regard technology as no more than means to an end. Flavin accepted the apparently undesirable industrial stigma of the fluorescent lamp fixture; Preston McClanahan perceived that he could realize his intentions for light by using plexiglas as a transmitter; and Stephen Antonakos saw that neon tubing was an object as well as a drawing in space. Their comprehension of the medium was matched by their acumen for its substance.

The charismatic nature of light is forcing a change in the specific relationship between the spectator and the work, as well as in the artist's concern for that relationship. The active quality

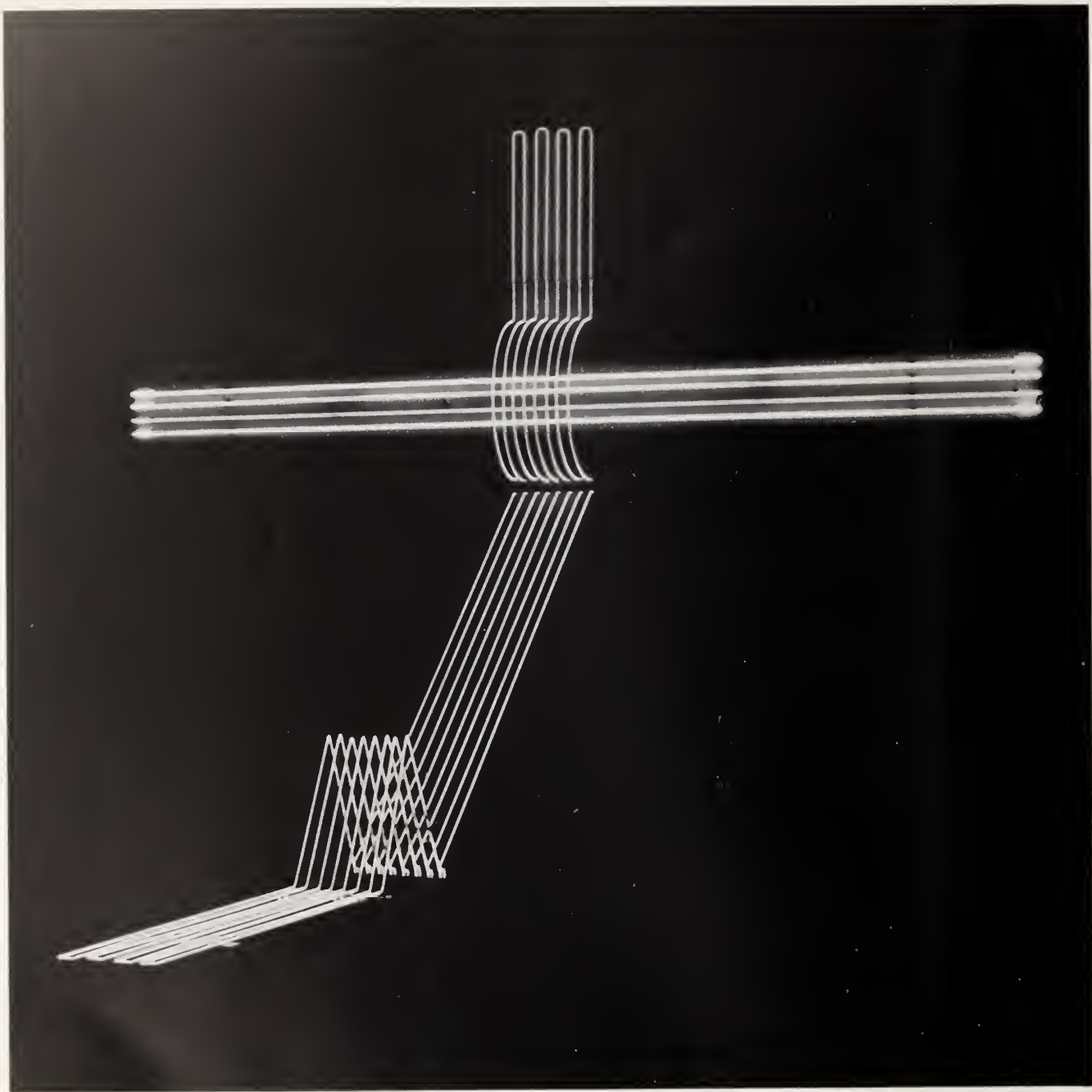
allows the work to literally force itself upon the spectator, involve him, cloak him in its own substance. The passive nature of megalith and menhir is being replaced by the action of actinic rays. The group called USCO is now a vanguard in the movement to break down categories, media, space, form, and by using projection devices, film, stroboscopes, create a totally new environment for sensory reaction. The insatiable desire for action on the part of artist and spectator alike has made artificial light one of the most salient mediums in art today.

"Artists who now make light paintings and electronic sculptures are forcing new materials to conform with the old esthetic framework."⁷ Boyd Mefferd's statement is both fact and challenge. Much of the significant work in the medium has been done by those artists who applied artificial light to the problems of creating an object or image. This exhibition is intended to emphasize that fact. Whether or not the involvement of artist and technology will breed a new format, a new esthetic framework, remains a question and the challenge. Artificial light, and its allied technical fields, is the fastest growing area in the arts today. Discoveries in theoretical and applied science seem to be limitless, and the artist will try to use whatever information and materials the scientist can produce. Certainly, the search for media is now a journey that will never end.



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Stephen Antonakos: *Red Neon from Wall to Floor*, 1966. Lent by Fischbach Gallery.

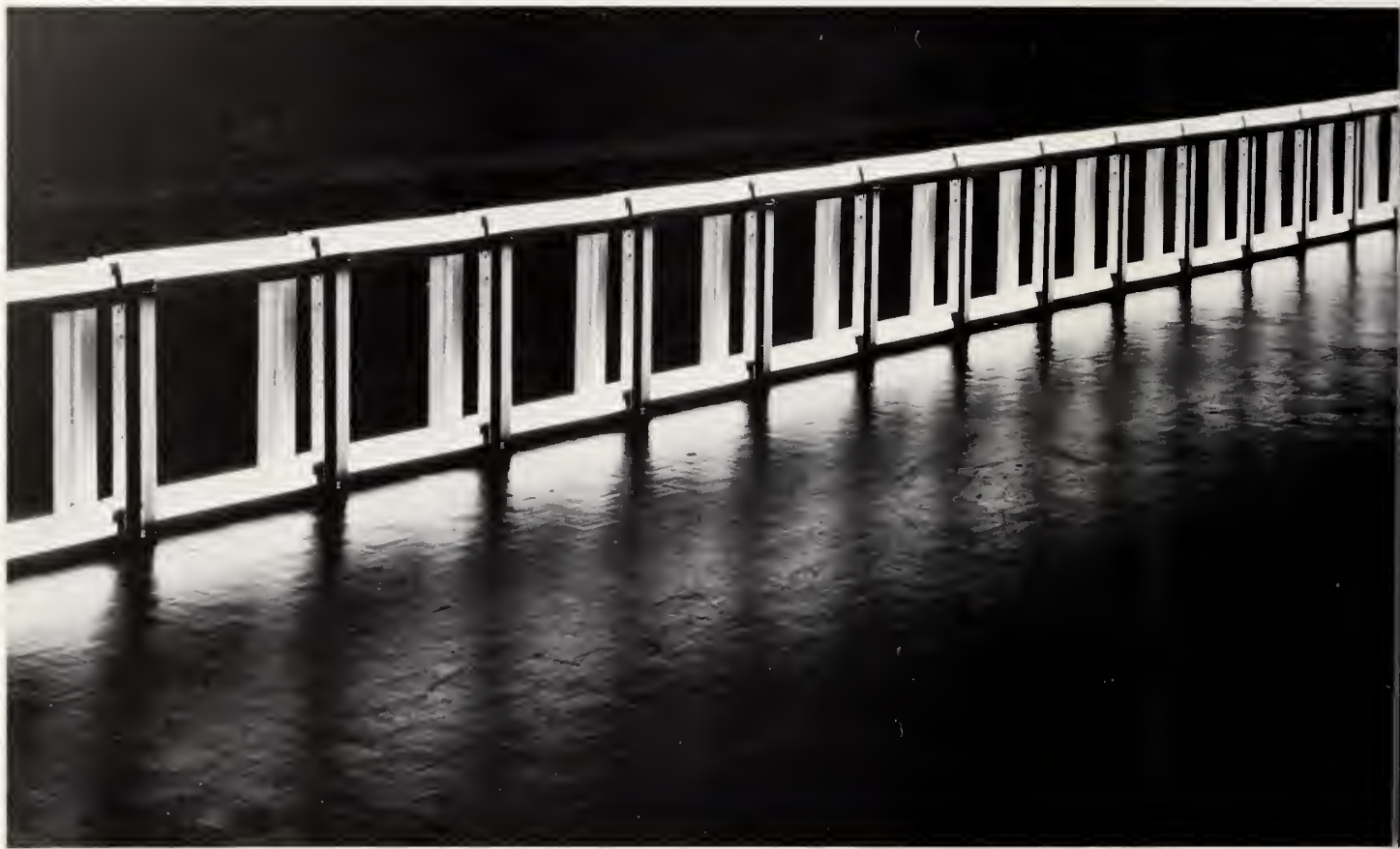
Stephen Antonakos

Born 1926, in southern Greece. Educated in the United States as a commercial illustrator and practiced that profession for twelve years. Became aware of collage technique upon seeing an exhibition of work by the Italian artist Alberto Burri. Began working exclusively with constructions made from fabrics or found objects in 1954, and brought the work to a conclusion in 1964, with the series called *Pillows* a transformation of the familiar object to an unfamiliar condition. Light materials appeared in several constructions, such as the word 'dream' made from neon tubing, and in 1962, he made two works with neon the principal material. Attracted to the color and flexibility of neon, as well as to its inherent potential for change, States unequivocally that he is a sculptor. All works based on formal arrangements of straight and curved lines, which become a foundation for light as a vibrant, pervasive image of color.

Exhibitions

One-man, University of Maine, Orono, Maine, 1958; Avant-Garde Gallery, New York, 1958; Byron Gallery, New York, 1964; Miami Museum of Modern Art, Miami, Florida, 1964; Schramm Galleries, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, 1964; Fischbach Gallery, New York, 1967, 1968; Group Artist Gallery, New York, 1957, 1958; Miami Museum of Modern Art, Miami, Florida, 1958; "New Forms New Media, I," "New Forms New Media, II," Martha Jackson Gallery, New York, 1960; Allan Stone Gallery, New York, 1961, 1962; Byron Gallery, New York, 1963; "All Fur Art," Allan Stone Gallery, New York, 1964; "Around Travel," PVI Gallery, New York, 1964; "100 American

Drawings," Byron Gallery, New York, 1964; "100 Artists," PVI Gallery, New York, 1965; "65 Self Portraits," Visual Arts Gallery, New York, 1965; "The New American Realism," Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1965; "Contemporary Erotica," Van Bovenkamp Gallery, New York, 1965; "New Acquisitions," Finch College Museum, New York, 1965; "Faculty Exhibition," Brooklyn Museum Art School, Brooklyn, New York, 1965; "Annual Exhibition of Sculpture and Prints," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1966; "Art in Process," Finch College Museum, New York, 1966; "Contemporary American Sculpture: Selection I," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1966; "Current Trends in American Art," Westmoreland County Museum, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, 1966; "Faculty Exhibition," Brooklyn Museum Art School, Brooklyn, New York, 1966; "Flint Invitational," Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, Michigan, 1966; "Kunst Licht Kunst," Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands, 1966; Philbrook Art Institute, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1966; "Sound Light Silence: Art That Performs," Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri, 1966; "American Sculpture of the Sixties," Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, & Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, 1967; "the 1967 Pittsburgh International," Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1967; "Focus on Light," The New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey, 1967; "Light and Motion," Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1967; "Light/Motion/Space,"



Dan Flavin: *An Artificial Barrier of Blue, Red & Blue Fluorescent Light* (to Flavin Starbuck Judd). 1968.
(As installed in the Gemeentemuseum, The Hague. The work shown in the exhibition will be a variant of this routine.)



Center Gallery, Washington, D.C., 1966; "Electric Art," Galerie Ileana Sonnabend, Paris, 1966; "Four Artists," Kornblee Gallery, New York, 1966; "Kunst Licht Kunst," Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands, 1966; "Primary Structures," The Jewish Museum, New York, 1966; "Scale Models/Drawings," Dwan Gallery, New York, 1966; "Sculptors Drawings, Los Angeles/New York," University of California at Irvine, 1966; "American Sculpture of the Sixties," Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, & Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, 1967; "Art in Series," Finch College Museum of Art, New York, 1967; "Contemporary Drawings," New York University Loeb Student Center, New York, 1967; "Contemporary Watercolors," Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, 1967; "Focus on Light," The New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, 1967; "Kompas 3, Schilderkunst Na 1915 Uit," New York, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands, 1967; "Language to be Looked at and/or Things to be Read," Dwan Gallery, New York, 1967; "Opening Exhibition: Normal Art," The Lannis Museum of Normal Art, New York, 1967; "Preview," Irving Blum Gallery, Los Angeles, 1967; "Recent Acquisitions," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1967; "San Marino Biennale," San Marino, Italy, 1967; "Selected New York City Artists," Ithaca College Museum of Art, Ithaca, New York, 1967; "Documenta IV," Kassel, Germany, 1968; "Language II," Dwan Gallery, New York, 1968;

"Minimal Art," Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, 1968; "Plus By Minus," Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, 1968.

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The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; The Museum of Modern Art, New York (promised gift of Philip C. Johnson); Pasadena Art Museum, Pasadena; Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Howard Jones

Born 1922, in Ilion, New York. Studied painting at Syracuse University and attended various other institutions. Worked at a variety of occupations connected with art and the theatre and taught at several universities. Service as a fighter pilot during World War II and a trip to the Near East in 1962 induced him to speculate on the relevance of time to human experience. Soon his paintings became divided into zones of light and dark, with silhouettes of human beings partially obscured by an indeterminate light. The role of light as a life force was emphasized by adding actual light, that is, light bulbs, to the surface of the paintings. Developed patterns of bulbs, used in conjunction with painted human silhouettes, as an expression of time consciousness. Recent work, time columns and sound pieces, continue to exploit the relation of art and life for "light and sound, like life and thought, are actively involved with time, change and interval."³

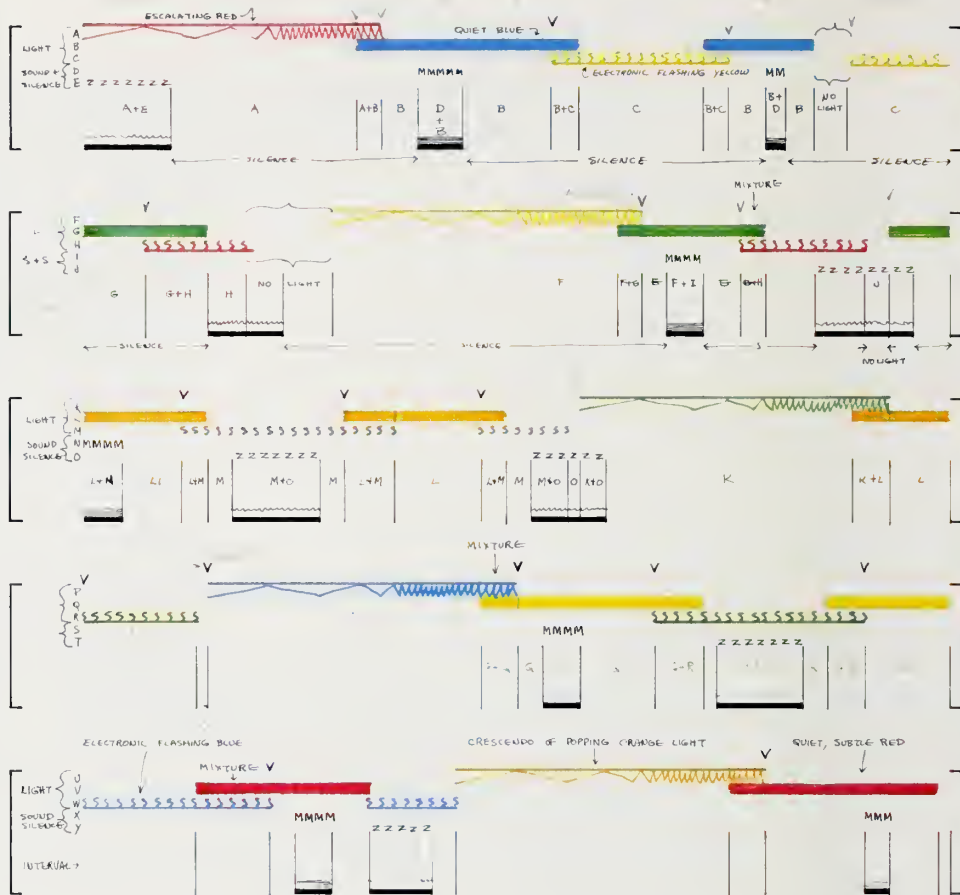
Exhibitions

One-man: H. Balaban Carp Gallery, St. Louis, Missouri, 1963; Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri, 1965; Royal Marks Gallery, New York, 1966; Howard Wise Gallery, New York, 1968. Group: 23rd Contemporary American Oil Painting Exhibition, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1953; "The

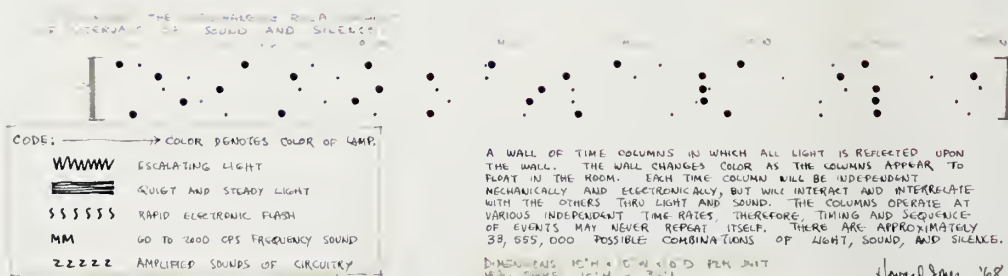
"TIME COLUMNS - THE SOUND OF LIGHT"

10' x 10' x 10' PER COLUMN
APPROXIMATELY 10' x 10' x 10'

TIME DRAWINGS FOR FIVE TIME COLUMNS



A PROTOCOL FOR THE WHITNEY MUSEUM



Howard Jones: sketch for *Time Columns - The Sound of Light*, 1968. (The work itself is in the exhibition.)

Box Show," Byron Gallery, New York, 1965;
 "Art Turned On," Institute of Contemporary Art,
 Boston, 1966; "Highlights 65/66," The Aldrich
 Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield,
 Connecticut, 1966; "Sound Light Silence:
 Art that Performs," Nelson Gallery-
 Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri, 1966;
 "Lights in Orbit," Howard Wise Gallery,
 New York, 1967; "Light/Motion/Space," Walker
 Art Center, Minneapolis, & Milwaukee Art Center,
 Milwaukee, 1967; "Light & Movement," Flint
 Institute of Art, 1967; "Visual Assaults," Georgia
 Museum of Art, University of Georgia, Athens,
 Georgia, 1967; "Festival of Lights," Howard Wise
 Gallery, New York, 1967; "The Magic Theatre,"
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Light/Motion/Space, 1967. In cooperation with
 Howard Wise Gallery. Introduction by
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Public Collections

Albrecht Museum, St. Joseph, Missouri;
 The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art,
 Ridgefield, Connecticut; City Art Museum,
 St. Louis; Florida State University, Tallahassee;
 Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City,
 Missouri; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis;
 Washington University, St. Louis.



Preston McClanahan: model for light project, 1968. (The work itself is in the exhibition.)

Born 1933, in Charleston, West Virginia. Youth spent developing an interest in art with formal training begun in 1952 at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. Became a graphic designer and painter. Moved to New York in 1958 and worked for the American Museum of Natural History where he was exposed to exhibition devices such as light and film while helping to create displays, especially a visual demonstration of the age of the earth. An obsession with the concept of time was added to a passionate love of music; "music exists in time, so does light. It's a starting point."⁵ Did frontal plane pieces incorporating light bulbs in a box-like structure. Bulky and awkward, these works were soon followed by more sophisticated geometric shapes made of plexiglas, a material which he had seen used at the American Museum of Natural History to transmit light. Subtle and reserved, his use of edge-lit plexiglas becomes an extremely successful blend of substance and energy. Now working toward development of an immaterial structure because "I have the obligation of making dreams visible, the source of dreams is everything that has ever made a strong impression, primarily light."⁶

Exhibitions

One-man: Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1967. Group: "Art Turned On," Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, 1965; "The Box Show," Byron Gallery, New York, 1965; "Current Art," Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1965; "Kunst Licht Kunst," Stedelijk van Abbemuseum,

Eindhoven, The Netherlands, 1966; "Light in Art," Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas, 1966; "The Object Transformed," The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1966; "Four Young Artists," Howard Wise Gallery, New York, 1967; "Light/Motion/Space," Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, & Milwaukee Art Center, Milwaukee, 1967; "Sculpture in Environment," New York City Parks Department, 1967; "Subterranea," Environment at Black Gate, New York, 1967; "Light Sculpture," Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, 1968; "Air Art," Arts Council, YM/YWHA, Philadelphia, 1968.

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Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.



Boyd Mefferd: *Electro-Spectral Groups Numbers 1 & 2*. 1967.
Lent by the Milwaukee Art Center and Nancy Singer Gallery.

Boyd Mefferd

Born 1941, in St. Louis, Missouri. Studied at Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design. Taught at Wisconsin State University and the University of South Dakota. First used artificial light for its realistic effect while studying painting, and immediately proceeded to production of a vehicle for light itself. Rejected first attempt, a lightbulb grid, and constructed a series of cubes using formica, plastic sheets and light. Went on to build large, rectangular boxes housing complex electronic components. Exceptionally alert to technology, its implications, advantages and challenges, and believes that it contains the potential for a new esthetic system. Works primarily with colored light which he manipulates by electronic switching to achieve effects of motion and the consequent visualization of time by interval and continuum. Regards light as a means to a psychological end: "I believe that ultimately a purely time dimensional approach to abstract composition is just as capable of communication as the abstract two and three dimensional work we have now."⁷

Exhibitions

One-man: Tennessee Fine Arts Center, Nashville, Tennessee, 1967; Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas, 1968; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1968. Group: "Sound Light Silence," Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri, 1966; "Lights in Orbit," Howard Wise Gallery, New York, 1967; "Light/Motion/Space," Walker Art Center, Minneapolis & Milwaukee

Art Center, Milwaukee, 1967; "Light," Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri, 1967; "Light and Motion," Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1967; "Festival of Lights," Howard Wise Gallery, New York, 1967; "The Magic Theatre," Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri, 1968; "Options," Milwaukee Art Center, Milwaukee, 1968.

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Public Collections

Milwaukee Art Center, Milwaukee; Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Catalogue of the Exhibition

All dimensions are in inches. Height precedes width and depth. Numbers 11, 13-15, are shown in New York only.

- 1 Stephen Antonakos. *Red Neon From Wall to Floor*. 1966. Programmed neon, steel. 120 x 144 x 168. Lent by Fischbach Gallery.
- 2 Dan Flavin. *Untitled*. 1968. Green fluorescent lamps, steel. 150 x 480 x 426. Lent by Dwan Gallery.
- 3 Howard Jones. *Time Columns—The Sound of Light*. 1968. Aluminum, electronic components. 120 x 10 x 10 (five units). Lent by Howard Wise Gallery.
- 4 Stanley Landsman. *Albuquerque*. 1968. Wood, glass, electric circuitry. 78 x 40 x 24. Lent by Leo Castelli Gallery.
- 5 Stanley Landsman. *Barmecide*. 1968. Wood, glass, electric circuitry. 74 x 24 x 18. Lent by Leo Castelli Gallery.
- 6 Stanley Landsman. *Bubastis*. 1968. Wood, glass, electric circuitry. 74 x 36 x 18. Lent by Leo Castelli Gallery.
- 7 Stanley Landsman. *Cawther-1-2-4*. 1968. Wood, glass, electric circuitry. 42 x 12½ x 12½ (one unit), 42 x 24½ x 12½ (two units), 42 x 24½ x 24½ (four units). Lent by Leo Castelli Gallery.
- 8 Stanley Landsman. *Hyman*. 1968. Wood, glass, electric circuitry. 84 x 24 x 24. Lent by Leo Castelli Gallery.
- 9 Stanley Landsman. *Pinocchio*. 1968. Wood, glass, electric circuitry. 74 x 25 x 24. Lent by Leo Castelli Gallery.
- 10 Stanley Landsman. *Snooker*. 1968. Wood, glass, electric circuitry. 72 x 10 x 10. Lent by Leo Castelli Gallery.
- 11 Stanley Landsman. *South of Whittenberg*. 1968. Wood, glass, electric circuitry. 74 x 24 x 24. Lent by Leo Castelli Gallery.
- 12 Stanley Landsman. *Theseus and Ariadne*. 1968. Wood, glass, electric circuitry. 75½ x 54½ x 24. Whitney Museum of American Art. Gift of The Howard and Jean Lipman Foundation, Inc.
- 13 Preston McClanahan. *Untitled*. 1968. Plexiglas, electro-mechanical components. 66 x 144 x 2. Lent by Howard Wise Gallery.
- 14 Boyd Mefferd. *Electro-Spectral Group Number 1*. 1967. Plexiglas, wood, incandescent lamps, electronic circuitry. 84 x 12 x 12 (two units). Lent by the Milwaukee Art Center.
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- Spear, Athena Tacha, "Sculptured Light," *Art International*, 11:29-49, Christmas 1967.
- Waldman, Diane, *Chryssa: Selected Works 1955-1967*, New York, The Pace Gallery, 1968.

Notes to the Introduction

1. Quoted by Douglas M. Davis, "Art & Technology—The New Combine," *Art In America*, 56:29, January-February 1968.
2. Dan Flavin, "Some Remarks . . .," *Artforum*, 5:27, December 1966.
3. Because their work was so appropriate to this exhibition, both Douglas Wheeler and James Turrell, of Santa Monica, California, were invited to participate. However, both later withdrew upon their own volition. The statement by Mr. Wheeler was made in conversation with the author, 1968.
4. Gyorgy Kepes, "Modulation of Light," in *Light As a Creative Medium*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, 1965, page 26.
5. Conversation with the author, 1968.
6. Dan Flavin, "...in daylight or cool white," *Artforum*, 4:24, December 1965.
7. Boyd Mefferd, "Notes," in *Boyd Mefferd: Electronics*, Nashville, Tennessee Fine Arts Center, 1967, page 11.

Notes to the Biographies

1. Dan Flavin, "...in daylight or cool white," *Artforum*, 4:22, December 1965.
2. *Ibid*, 4:24.
3. Letter to the author, 1968.
4. Conversation with the author, 1968.
5. *Ibid*.
6. Eindhoven, The Netherlands, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, *Kunst Licht Kunst*, 1967, no page number.
7. Boyd Mefferd, "Notes," in *Boyd Mefferd: Electronics*, Nashville, Tennessee Fine Arts Center, 1967, pages 6, 9.
8. Eindhoven, The Netherlands, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, *Kunst Licht Kunst*, 1967, no page number

